

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 252248 TOSEC 160290

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 7197 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 23 OCT

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S E C R E T AMMAN 7197

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, EG,SY, US

SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN: RIFAI'S VISIT TO EGYPT AND
SYRIAN RELATIONS

REF: A. AMMAN 7104

B. STATE 248957 (REPEATING CAIRO 10528)

1. I MET WITH KING FOR A TALK AFTERNOON OCTOBER 22. HE
OUTLINED FOR ME IN SOME DETAIL RIFAI'S TRIP, ALL OF WHICH
HAS BEEN REPORTED IN REFTEL A. HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE
CERTAIN PRINCIPAL RESULTS. THESE INCLUDED SADAT'S HEAVY
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CHASTISEMENT OF ASHRAF MARWAN DURING THE MEETING AND HIS

INSISTENCE THAT JORDANIAN CONTACTS NOW BE FUNNELED THROUGH MUBARAK OR SALIM. KING WAS NOT DEFINITE ON EXACTLY WHICH ONE. HE ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT WHILE DRESSING DOWN OF MARWAN WAS LIMITED TO HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR RIFAI'S VISIT WHICH HAD RESULTED IN PRIOR CANCELLATIONS. SADAT HAD ALSO COME TO REALIZE THAT MARWAN'S REPORTING ON HIS VARIOUS TRIPS THROUGH THE ARAB WORLD PRIOR TO THE SINAI AGREEMENT WAS LESS THAN EXACT ABOUT THE POSITIONS OF THE VARIOUS ARAB STATES. KING SAID HE THOUGHT SADAT'S SURPRISE AT THE REACTIONS TO THE SINAI ACCORD WAS IN PART BROUGHT ABOUT BY ASHRAF MARWAN'S MISLEADING REPORTS.

2. SECOND POINT KING THOUGHT WAS IMPORTANT WAS THAT RIFAI HAD DONE WHAT HE COULD TO ENCOURAGE SADAT TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS GOOD POSITION IN US TO PRESS THE US PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY ON THE NEXT STEP ON THE GOLAN. THIS WOULD HELP, IN KING'S JUDGEMENT, TO TAKE SOME OF THE HEAT OFF SADAT AND IF STEP WERE MADE, HE COULD QUITE RIGHTFULLY TAKE LION'S SHARE OF THE CREDIT WITH THE SYRIANS AND IN THE WORLD IN GENERAL FOR HAVING GOTTEN IT GOING. KING SAID SADAT COMPLAINED BITTERLY ABOUT BAATH PARTY STAND BUT WAS NOT SO PERSONALLY CRITICAL OF ASAD.

3. KING WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY WHAT RIFAI HAD REPORTED TO HIM ON SADAT'S VIEWS ON THE PLO. ASIDE FROM THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT, KING SAID SADAT TOLD RIFAI THAT HE SHOULD HAVE SENT HUSSEIN A CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE IN 1970 FOR HAVING DEALT WITH PALESTINIANS THEN AND HE REGRETTED DEEPLY NOT HAVING SUPPORTED HUSSEIN MORE STRONGLY IN RABAT IN 1974. (COMMENT: KING IS USED TO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SOFT SOAP FROM HIS "ARAB BROTHERS" BUT I THINK HE SINCERELY ADMIRES SADAT AND FINDS HIS STATEMENTS ALONG THE LINES ABOVE BELIEVABLE AND WELCOME).

4. BECAUSE THE CONVERSATION UP TO THIS POINT WAS AT SUCH A VARIANCE TO WHAT FAHMY HAD REPORTED (REFTEL B) ABOUT SADAT TRYING TO BREAK OFF JORDAN FROM SYRIA, I ASKED KING DIRECTLY, BUT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANYTHING, WHAT HAD BEEN EGYPTIAN REACTION TO HIS NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA? HE SAID THAT SADAT HAD BEEN ENCOURAGING ABOUT IT AND QUITE COMPLIMENTARY.

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INDEED, HE SAID, JORDAN PRESS (AMMAN 7144) HAD REFLECTED THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF SADAT'S VIEWS. KING INDICATED HE THINKS SADAT WILL REPORT TO HIM, PROBABLY THROUGH MUBARAK, WHEN SADAT COMES BACK FROM HIS U.S. TRIP. KING EXPRESSED HIS OWN CONCERN THAT HE NOT MOVE TOWARD EGYPT TOO QUICKLY BECAUSE OF HIS SYRIAN RELATIONSHIP. IN RESPONSE TO MY DIRECT QUESTION, KING SAID THAT ANY VISIT BY HIM TO EGYPT IS ON THE SHELF FOR THE MOMENT. KING HOWEVER LEFT ME WITH IMPRESSION THAT HE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO GO TO EGYPT AT SOME

APPROPRIATE TIME AFTER SADAT'S RETURN FROM THE U.S.

5. THE KING WENT ON TO DISCUSS WITH ME A NUMBER OF POINTS WHICH I HAD EARLIER GONE OVER IN SOME DETAIL WITH RIFAI (REFEL A). HE THINKS SOME REASONABLE OFFER ON THE GOLAN IS REQUIRED FOR A NEXT STEP AND WHILE HE IS IN MORE DOUBT ABOUT ASAD'S INTENTIONS TOWARD WAR OR NEGOTIATION, BELIEVES THAT ANY RESPONSIBLE OFFER COULD STEER ASAD TOWARD ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS PEACE. HE ALSO AGREES THAT ASAD IS LIKELY TO RENEW THE GOLAN MANDATE, BUT WILL POSSIBLY KEEP THE AREA IN SUSPENSE UNTIL HE IS LED TO DO SO. HE SAID HE RECOGNIZES THAT IF ANY FURTHER CONFLICT SHOULD BREAK OUT, HIS OWN VITAL INTEREST ARE AT STAKE AND WILL, HE SAYS, CONTINUE TO URGE RENEWAL ON ASAD.

HE ADDED THAT ASAD WAS VERY DISTURBED BY THE SHOOTING OF TWO SYRIAN SHEPHERDS ALONG THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE IN THE GOLAN LAST WEEK. ASAD CLAIMS HE GOT ISRAELI APOLOGIES. NEVERTHELESS ASAD INDICATED HE WOULD RETALIATE AND THEN SEND THE ISRAELIS HIS APOLOGIES. HE DID NOT WANT THE WORLD TO BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL COULD GET AWAY WITH KILLING INNOCENT PEOPLE ON THE DEMILITARIZED LINES WITHOUT SOME RECOURSE FROM SYRIA. (COMMENT: THIS MAY EXPLAIN RECENT SYRIAN CLAIMS OF SHOOTING FOUR ISRAELIS WHICH ISRAELIS DENY.)

5. KING SAID THAT SYRIAN AIR FORCE CHIEF NAJI JAMIL WAS HERE WITH ANOTHER SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER LAST WEEK PRIMARILY TO COORDINATE COOPERATION ON INTERNAL SECURITY PROGRAMS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, JAMIL HAD TALKED ABOUT SOVIET AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE SYRIAN WITH MORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT. KING SAID THAT IN SPITE OF SYRIAN TALK ABOUT SOVIET FORTHCOMINGNESS, HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD AMOUNT TO VERY MUCH IN TERMS OF IMPROVED SYRIAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES OR CHANGE THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION.

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6. JAMIL HAD STOPPED OFF TO SEE JORDANIAN F-5 AIRCRAFT AT ONE OF THE NORTHERN AIR BASES. THE SYRIAN HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE FACT THAT ENGINE CHANGES IN US AIRCRAFT TOOK PLACE ONLY AFTER 700 HOURS AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 100 HOURS ON SOVIET MODELS. JAMIL ADDED THAT ALL THEIR ENGINES GO BACK TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR OVERHAULING.

7. KING IS ENCOURAGING SYRIANS TO LOOK TO THE WEST FOR DOCTRINE AND TACTICS WHICH HE FEELS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN WHAT THE SOVIETS HAVE TO OFFER. HE HOPES, HE SAYS, TO MAKE A FURTHER DENT ON SOVIET PRESENCE IN SYRIA BY HELPING TO SUBSTITUTE WESTERN IDEAS AND APPROACHES FOR SOVIET ONES. WITHOUT IMPROVED DOCTRINE AND TACTICS, HE BELIEVES NO AMOUNT OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT WILL MAKE A VERY SERIOUS

DIFFERNECE IN SYRIAN CAPABILITIES. HE HAD TALKED TO THE
PAKISTANIS WHO HAVE ADVISORS WITH THE SYRIAN AIR
FORCE. HE SAID THEY TOO ARE TEACHING WESTERN TACTICS AND APPROACHES
AND BELIEVE THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE COME TO SOME IMPROVEMENT
THROUGH THIS PROCESS. HE NOTES THAT THE SOVIETS ACCORDING
TO THE PAKISTANIS, HAVE BEEN UNHAPPY WITH THEIR PRESENCE.
KING SAYS OVER THE LONG TERM HE HOPES TO DEVELOP SOME
OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS WITH THE SYRIANS WHICH
WILL LEVER THEM AWAY FROM COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON THE
SOVIET UNION.

7. SUGGES DEPARTMENT REPEAT SECRETARY'S PARTY, ATHERTON,
CAIRO AND DAMASCUS.
PICKERING UNQTE INGERSOLL

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